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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 11 December 1991, at 3 p.m.

President:	Mr. SHIHABI	(Saudi Arabia)
later:	Mr. WILENSKI (Vice-President)	(Australia)

- Questions relating to information
  - (a) Report of the Special Political Committee
  - (b) Amendment
  - (c) Report of the Fifth Committee
- Question of Palestine:
  - (a) Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People
  - (b) Report of the Secretary-General
  - (c) Draft resolutions
  - (d) Report of the Fifth Committee
- Programme of work

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 75 (continued)

QUESTIONS RELATING TO INFORMATION:

(a) REPORT OF THE SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE (A/46/641)

(b) AMENDMENT (A/46/L.46)

(c) REPORT OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE (A/46/755)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Members will recall that at the 66th plenary meeting, held last Monday, the Rapporteur of the Special Political Committee introduced all the reports of that Committee. Members will also recall that the Assembly took action on the recommendations contained in all the reports of the Special Political Committee with the exception of the report on agenda item 75, entitled "Questions relating to information", which was postponed at the request of a Member State.

The Assembly will now consider the report (A/46/641) of the Special Political Committee on agenda item 75, entitled "Questions relating to information".

The Assembly has before it two draft resolutions, A and B, recommended by the Special Political Committee in paragraph 22 of the report and one draft decision recommended by the Special Political Committee in paragraph 23 of the report.

In connection with draft resolution B, an amendment thereto (A/46/L.45) has been submitted by Poland. I should like to inform members that the amendment has now been withdrawn. I am grateful for the cooperation of the representative of Poland and thank him for his efforts.

Mr. MROZIEWICZ (Poland): The delegation of the Republic of Poland has never intended to cause any inconvenience to this body. Regrettably, under the pressure of circumstances, we are compelled to present our cause before the General Assembly and to appeal for its assistance.

As representatives in the Special Political Committee and especially in the Committee on Information know, the Polish delegation has been involved since last year in a prolonged dialogue with the Department of Public Information on the opening of the United Nations Information Centre in Poland. Let me remind members that the agreement on the establishment of the Centre in Warsaw was signed in April 1986 on the basis of General Assembly resolutions 38/82 A, 39/88 A and 40/164 A, and it needed only some modifications.

After arduous negotiations, we managed to resolve all legal, organizational and financial aspects of that important endeavour except one: we were waiting for the approval of the financial contribution of the Polish Government. The decision on that matter arrived on Friday, 6 December, 1991. On the same day, we presented the last of our documents to the Department of Public Information, indicating that the Polish Government had fulfilled its obligations to the Information Centre in Warsaw.

And now I have the honour to inform the General Assembly that my Government, in accordance with our understanding with the Department of Public Information, is providing rent-free premises for the Information Centre, with due maintenance, as well as the necessary furniture for the Centre. In addition to that very substantial offer, we shall cover salaries for three local staff members. As I have said, last Friday the amount of 200 million

(Mr. Mroziewicz, Poland)

Polish zlotys was transferred to the Information Centre's account in the Warsaw Trade Bank.

We were assured that the programme budget implications would be prepared by the Controller for presentation to the Fifth Committee and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions should such a necessity arise. When we asked for the postponement of the discussion on agenda item 75, our only purpose was to give the Controller time to prepare such a document.

Lastly, turning to the draft amendment submitted by the delegation of Poland for today's meeting, I should like to state that we have decided not to take action on it. Our decision is a result of extensive consultations with the President of the General Assembly and with a number of delegations, during which all parties have clearly indicated their willingness to work towards ensuring an early and satisfactory solution to our case. We shall therefore gladly accept any solution which enables us to open the Information Centre in Warsaw.

I should also like to emphasize that an important factor in our considerations was the willingness of the Polish delegation to contribute towards preserving the consensus achieved in the Committee on Information and in the Special Political Committee after difficult and prolonged discussions.

(Mr. Mroziewicz, Poland)

According to the authoritative opinion of the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, the Department of Public Information

"could indicate its intention to implement the agreement by including the funds needed in the proposed budget for the biennium 1992-1993 so as to be in a position to open the centre in 1992".

We believe that in this respect it would be right to convene, as soon as possible, a meeting of the Bureau of the Committee on Information with the participation of the spokesmen of the regional groups and China to discuss ways and means of providing funds for our United Nations information centre within existing resources.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The Assembly will now take action on the recommendations contained in paragraphs 22 and 23 of the report of the Special Political Committee (A/46/641).

The Assembly will first take action on draft resolution A, entitled "Information in service of humanity". The Special Political Committee adopted draft resolution A without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution A was adopted (resolution 46/73 A).

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): Draft resolution B is entitled "United Nations public information policies and activities". The report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of the draft resolution is contained in document A/46/755. The Special Political Committee adopted draft resolution B without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution B was adopted (resolution 46/73 B).

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The Assembly will now take action on the draft decision entitled "Increase in the membership of the Committee on Information". The Special Political Committee adopted the draft decision without a vote. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft decision was adopted.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I call on the representative of Costa Rica, who wishes to explain the position of her delegation.

Mrs. CASTRO de BARISH (Costa Rica) (interpretation from Spanish): My delegation wishes to explain its position on draft resolution B contained in the report of the Special Political Committee (A/46/641). We are doing so today because we were unable to be present in the Committee when the proposal was adopted.

My delegation joined in the consensus on draft resolutions A and B recommended by the Special Political Committee, entitled respectively "Information in service of humanity" and "United Nations public information policies and activities". We supported both texts in a spirit of cooperation and accommodation. None the less, we wish to express our reservations with respect to paragraph 1 (m) of draft resolution B. As paragraphs 17 to 20 of the report of the Special Political Committee show, that paragraph does not take into account the request we made at the April 1991 session of the Committee on Information. Paragraph 19 of the report reads as follows:

(Mrs. Castro de Barish, Costa Rica)

"At [the 9th meeting, on 25 October], the representative of Costa Rica stated that, at the thirteenth session of the Committee on Information, in April 1991, Costa Rica had requested to have a United Nations information centre established in that country, but that since the request had not been duly reflected in the Committee's report, draft resolution A/SPC/46/L.8 was being submitted. In order not to break the consensus, Costa Rica did not insist on any action being taken on draft resolution A/SPC/46/L.8, but reiterated the wish to have a United Nations information centre established in Costa Rica, taking advantage of the facilities and premises offered by the University of Peace, which was established by General Assembly resolution 35/55 of 5 December 1980, and requested that the draft resolution be reflected in the Committee's report to the Assembly." (A/46/641, para. 19)

My delegation is pleased at the objective and complete way in which our position has been reflected in the report, and we are grateful that our concerns were taken into account. We hope that at the next session of the Committee on Information, it will be possible to meet my Government's wish to have a United Nations information centre in Costa Rica, taking advantage of the facilities and premises of the University of Peace, which are more than adequate for that purpose.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 75 and of all the reports of the Special Political Committee.

AGENDA ITEM 33 (continued)

QUESTION OF PALESTINE

(a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE (A/46/35)

(b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/46/623 and Corr.1)

(c) DRAFT RESOLUTIONS (A/46/L.33 to A/46/L.37)

(d) REPORT OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE (A/46/764)

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I remind representatives that the debate on this item was concluded at the 54th plenary meeting, on 25 November.

In connection with this item, five draft resolutions have been submitted, in documents A/46/L.33 to A/46/L.37.

I call now on His Excellency Mr. Ricardo Alarcon de Quesada of Cuba, Acting Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienble Rights of the Palestinian People, who wishes to introduce the five draft resolutions.

Mr. ALARCON de QUESADA (Cuba), Acting Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienble Rights of the Palestinian People (interpretation from Spanish): I wish first of all to say how pleased I am to have this opportunity to address the General Assembly as Acting Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienble Rights of the Palestinian People.

It is my honour, on behalf of that Committee, to introduce to the Assembly draft resolutions A/46/L.33, L.34, L.35, L.36 and L.37. I would note that Bangladesh and Viet Nam have become sponsors of all five draft resolutions, and that Pakistan has become a sponsor of draft resolutions A/46/L.36 and L.37.

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

The first three of these draft resolutions, A/46/L.33, A/46/L.34 and A/46/L.35, are basically the same as those submitted in earlier years; they are designed to enable the Committee, the Division for Palestinian Rights and the Department of Public Information to carry out their programme of work pursuant to the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 and the statement by the Secretary-General on financial implications.

Under draft resolution A/46/L.33, the Assembly would endorse the recommendations contained in the report of the Committee and would request the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate. The Assembly would also authorize the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, and to make such adjustments in its programme of seminars and meetings for non-governmental organizations as it deemed necessary, to give special emphasis to the need to mobilize public opinion in Europe and North America, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session and thereafter.

The Assembly would also request the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation to non-governmental organizations and to take the necessary steps to expand its contacts with those organizations. In the same draft resolution, A/46/L.33, the Assembly would request the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, as well as other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine, to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee.

Draft resolution A/46/L.34 deals specifically with the role of the Secretariat. By it, the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat with the necessary resources, including a computer-based information system, and to ensure that it continues to discharge the tasks detailed in earlier esolutions, including the organization of seminars, meetings, and symposia of non-governmental organizations and the preparation of studies and information material. It would also invite Governments and organizations to lend their cooperation to the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in the performance of their respective tasks. It would also take note with appreciation of the action taken by Member States to observe annually on 29 November the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

By draft resolution A/46/L.35, which refers to the role of the Department of Public Information, the General Assembly would request the Department, in cooperation and coordination with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to continue, with the necessary flexibility, as may be required by developments affecting the question of Palestine, its special information programme on the question of Palestine, with particular emphasis on public opinion in Europe and North America. In particular, it would request the Department of Public Information to disseminate information on all the activities of the United Nations system relating to the question of Palestine; to continue to issue and update publications on the various aspects of the question of Palestine; to expand its audio-visual material on the question of Palestine; to organize and promote news missions for journalists to the area, including the occupied territories; and, lastly, to organize international, regional and national encounters for journalists.

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

Draft resolution A/46/L.36 deals with the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. By it the General Assembly would take account of events that had taken place recently and it would refer to the basic elements of its resolution 45/68 of 6 December 1990, which was given almost unanimous support by members of this Assembly, and would state, in operative paragraph 2, that it considered that the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East - under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination - would contribute to the promotion of peace in the region.

In paragraph 3 it would reaffirm the following principles for the achievement of comprehensive peace, namely: the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories; guaranteeing arrangements for security of all States in the region, including those named in resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, and subsequent relevant resolutions; dismantling the Israel settlements in the territories occupied since 1967; and, lastly, guaranteeing freedom of access to Holy Places, religious buildings and sites.

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

By paragraph 4, the Assembly would welcome the convening of the Peace Conference on the Middle East in Madrid on 30 October 1991, which constitutes a significant step towards the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region.

By paragraphs 5 and 6, the General Assembly would note the expressed desire and endeavours to place the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, under the supervision of the United Nations for a transitional period, as part of the peace process, and would request the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region, and to submit progress reports on developments in the matter. As can be seen, the text is moderate and objective in its approach. By approving it, the General Assembly would be making a positive and constructive contribution to the restoration of peace, stability and security in the Middle East, enabling the Palestinian people to make progress towards the restoration of its inalienable and legitimate rights.

I also have the honour of introducing draft resolution A/46/L.37, which is entitled "The uprising (intifadah) of the Palestinian people". Under this draft resolution, the General Assembly would condemn the practices and policies of Israel, the occupying Power, which violate the human rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem. It would demand that Israel abide scrupulously by the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and desist immediately from those policies and practices which are in violation of the provisions of the Convention. It would call upon all the High Contracting

(Mr. Alarcon de Quesada, Cuba)

Parties to the Convention to ensure respect by Israel for the Convention and urge them to respond to the note verbale submitted to them by the Secretary-General in accordance with paragraph 6 of Security Council resolution 681 (1990). The General Assembly would strongly deplore the continuing disregard by Israel, the occupying Power, of the relevant decisions of the Security Council, and reaffirm that Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territory since 1967, including Jerusalem, and of the other Arab territories in no way changes the legal status of those territories. It would request the Security Council to examine with urgency the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory with a view to considering measures needed to provide international protection to the Palestinian civilians in the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem. It would invite the international community to enhance its support for the Palestinian people, and it would request the Secretary-General to examine the present situation in the occupied territory by all means available to him and to submit periodic reports thereon.

The five draft resolutions that I have just introduced were formulated on the basis of a firm resolve to contribute to the peace process that is now under way, to put an end to violence and repression and to make real progress towards a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine. On behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I invite delegations to show the same resolve and to demonstrate their solidarity with the Palestinian people once again by taking a position clearly and categorically in favour of draft resolutions A/46/L.33, L.34, L.35, L.36 and L.37.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The Assembly will now proceed to consider the five draft resolutions. The report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications is contained in document A/46/764.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes or positions before the voting on any or all of the draft resolutions contained in documents A/46/L.33, L.34, L.35, L.36 and L.37.

I wish to remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats. Representatives will also have an opportunity to explain their votes after the voting has been completed.

Mr. PODTSEROB (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): At this session of the General Assembly the question of Palestine has been considered against a backdrop of renewed hope for a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, which for many years has had a destabilizing effect not only on the Middle East region but also on the international situation as a whole. The seriousness of the Palestinian problem and of the Middle East problem as a whole necessitated a search for innovative approaches. The ending of confrontation at the global level has made it possible to find such approaches that are in keeping with the new political thinking and with new realities.

The peace conference opened for the peoples of the region, most especially for the Palestinian people, prospects for a comprehensive settlement of the problems that exist there. Everybody knows how difficult the preparations for the Madrid Conference were, requiring good will on the part of those directly involved in the conflict, as well as intensive

(Mr. Podtserob, USSR)

diplomatic activity. The logic of compromise prevailed. Of course, the parties to the talks still have a long way to go, but it is of fundamental importance that they are moving towards conciliation and historic compromise.

The Soviet Union has always advocated an intensive search for a settlement of the question of Palestine on the basis of the right of peoples to self-determination, which is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and is the inalienable right of the Palestinian people too. That is the Soviet Union's position of principle on the subject. At the same time, we have made every effort to encourage the parties involved in the conflict to cooperate constructively in the preparations for and the convening of a peace conference and in the initiation of businesslike talks, both on a bilateral and on a multilateral basis, that can lead to the attainment of mutually acceptable agreements. Now that the negotiating process has begun and is continuing, we are of the opinion that it would be useful to create around it an atmosphere conducive to the development and strengthening of the Arab-Israeli dialogue, an integral part of which is Palestinian-Israeli dialogue.

(Mr. Podtserob, USSR)

Against that background the delegation of the Soviet Union, representing a country that is one of the co-chairmen of the conference, feels that it is not advisable for a decision to be taken at the General Assembly on the draft resolutions dealing with questions affecting the substance of the Palestinian problem. Rather, they should be considered, and decisions should be taken on them, at the Peace Conference on the Middle East. Accordingly, the Soviet delegation will abstain in the voting on draft resolutions A/46/L.36 and A/46/L.37.

At the same time, we of course consider it essential that the work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and of the Secretariat be continued on these questions relating to the Palestinian problem should continue. Accordingly, we shall vote in favour of draft resolutions A/46/L.33, A/46/L.34 and A/46/L.35.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The Assembly will now begin the voting process and take a decision on draft resolution A/46/L.33.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia,

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against: Israel, United States of America

Abstaining: Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Congo, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Draft resolution A/46/L.33 was adopted by 121 votes to 2, with 28 abstentions (resolution 46/74 A).

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/46/L.34.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of

Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against: Israel, United States of America

Abstaining: Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Congo, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Draft resolution A/46/L.34 was adopted by 121 votes to 2, with 28 abstentions (resolution 46/74 B).

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/46/L.35.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against: Israel, United States of America

Abstaining: Albania, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Draft resolution A/46/L.35 was adopted by 125 votes to 2, with 23 abstentions (resolution 46/74 C).

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/46/L.36, entitled "International Peace Conference on the Middle East".

A separate, recorded vote has been requested on the fifth preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 4.

As there appear to be no objections, that will be done.

I put to the vote the fifth preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 4 of draft resolution A/46/L.36.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, Union

of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against: Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq

Abstaining: None

The fifth preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 4 of draft resolution A/46/L.36 were adopted by 145 votes to 2.

The PRESIDENT: I now put to the vote draft resolution A/46/L.36 as a whole.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against: Israel, United States of America

Abstaining: Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Dominica, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Portugal, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Spain, Sweden, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay

Draft resolution A/46/L.36 as a whole was adopted by 104 votes to 2, with 43 abstentions (resolution 46/75).*

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* Subsequently the delegation of Poland advised the Secretariat that it had intended to abstain.

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/46/L.37, entitled "The uprising (intifadah) of the Palestinian people".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against: Israel, United States of America

Abstaining: Bahamas, Costa Rica, Panama, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Uruguay

Draft resolution A/46/L.37 was adopted by 142 to 2, with 5 abstentions (resolution 46/76).*

Subsequently the delegation of Fiji advised the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes.

May I remind delegations that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. WRAMPLEMEIER (United States of America): Since we met last year in this Hall to consider the item entitled "The Question of Palestine", an important and unprecedented development has occurred. Through the co-sponsorship of the United States and the Soviet Union, the parties to the Middle East conflict met in Madrid and launched direct, bilateral negotiations aimed at achieving a just, lasting, and comprehensive Middle East peace settlement.*

Let me recall what President Bush said at the opening meeting of the peace conference in Madrid on 30 October:

> "Peace will only come as the result of direct negotiations, compromise and give and take. Peace cannot be imposed from the outside, by the United States or anyone else. While we will continue to do everything possible to help the parties overcome obstacles, peace must come from within."

Direct negotiations began in Madrid on 30 October. They have now resumed in Washington, DC. The draft resolutions before the General Assembly today take some note of the process that began in Madrid. However, they fail to affirm the guiding principle of this peace process: that it must be up to the Governments and the peoples of the region to shape the future of the Middle

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* Mr. Wilenski (Australia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Wramplemeier, United States)

East. Outsiders, whether they are the United States and Soviet co-sponsors of the peace conference, the United Nations, or some other international institution, can only assist the parties directly involved to seize their responsibilities and persevere in the hard and often frustrating task of resolving the differences that have for so long divided them.

Moreover, draft resolution A/46/L.36 is regrettably flawed in two important respects. First, it contains language which seeks to determine in advance the outcome of those very issues which are now before the parties to the peace conference and which must be resolved through direct negotiation between them. Secondly, it considers convening an International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization on "an equal footing", as a contribution to promoting peace in the region. It appears as if the draft resolution ignores the major events which have taken place and in which the parties to peace are all present - Arabs, Israelis and Palestinians - and even seems to be an effort at complication that could jeopardize the prospects for success of the current talks. As one of the co-sponsors of the current Middle East peace conference, the United States finds itself unable to support such a proposal. We therefore voted against draft resolution A/46/L.36.

As for the other draft resolutions introduced under this item, they are essentially unchanged from those submitted last year. My delegation voted against these draft resolutions at that time, and has done so again today.

In conclusion, let me say that the United States recognizes fully the desire of the members of the General Assembly to see the peace process in the

(Mr. Wramplemeier, United States)

Middle East move forward and to achieve the goal we all seek: a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

My government believes that this goal can be most effectively and fairly achieved through continuing to support the negotiating process that began on 30 October. This process, which is based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), offers a path to peace which has been accepted by the parties directly involved and which is already in progress. It is a path which we should support rather than adopting resolutions which detract from these efforts.

Mr. VAN SCHAIK (Netherlands): I am speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States.

The twelve member States of the European Community abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/46/L.36 as a whole, concerning the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations.

The European Community and its member States restate the great significance they attach to the Middle East peace conference in Madrid, which has launched a process of negotiations on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) which should lead to a just and comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian question.

On the basis of the principles which have long governed their position, the Community and its member States are determined to continue to undertake all possible efforts, alongside the United States and the Soviet Union, to

(Mr. Van Schaik, Netherlands)

support this process. In Madrid they pledged their constructive partnership in all phases of the negotiations.

The European Community and its member States consider it of vital importance that the momentum gained at Madrid not be dissipated on procedural matters. They noted that the second round of bilateral negotiations started in Washington on 10 December. These negotiations should be pursued in good faith by all parties: only then may the way be opened to movement on substance and meaningful confidence-building measures.

The Twelve consider a halt to Israel's settlement activity in the occupied territories to be an essential contribution to creating the stable environment which progress in the negotiations requires. Renunciation of the Arab trade boycott is another.

The European Community and its member States reaffirm their commitment to making an active, practical contribution to progress in the multilateral negotiations on regional cooperation. We express the hope that all parties in the region will participate in these negotiations. The Twelve consider that the political and regional agendas should go hand in hand, each one reinforcing the other. However, regional cooperation cannot progress faster than movement towards a political settlement.

Given their close ties with all the parties involved, the European Community and its member States are determined to remain in close contact with all participants and to do all they can to promote significant steps in the direction of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement.

(Mr. Van Schaik, Netherlands)

The European Community and its member States believe that an unprecedented opportunity to create peace now exists. It is essential that the commitment shown by the parties in the current peace process be maintained, and that a climate of mutual confidence between the parties be established.

(Mr. Van Schaik, Netherlands)

The Twelve continue to hold the view that the United Nations, which is already involved in indispensable peace-keeping operations and in a wide range of humanitarian activities in the Middle East region and attended the Madrid Conference, has an important role to play in the ongoing peace process in the Middle East.

Taking into account the continuation of the negotiations in Washington in the framework of the current peace process, the Twelve deemed it appropriate at this juncture to abstain on draft resolution A/46/L.36 as a whole, concerning an international peace conference on the Middle East.

Mr. KHANI (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): The Syrian Arab Republic's vote in favour of draft resolution A/46/L.36, dated 5 December 1991, does not mean that we recognize Israel, which does not recognize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and which is still occupying the Syrian Golan Heights and other Arab territories in contravention of United Nations resolutions and international legality.

Mr. ALVAREZ (Uruguay) (interpretation from Spanish): The delegation of Uruguay was unable to go along with the favourable vote on draft resolutions A/46/L.36 and A/46/L.37. Uruguay, which fully shares the desire to achieve a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, finds nevertheless that the language of the draft resolutions is not appropriate for such a result. The language is the residue of earlier, confrontational speeches that have been made obsolete by events. Uruguay expects the best results from the discussions now under way and fervently hopes that they will initiate a process that brings peace to the Middle East. Uruguay pledges to do its utmost in the search for a peaceful solution, acceptable to all the parties in conflict, to the questions of Palestine and the Middle East.

Mr. AMER (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (interpretation from Arabic): My delegation voted in favour of the draft resolutions that have been adopted on the question of Palestine. Nevertheless, we would like to place on record that we have reservations on each and every paragraph of these resolutions that directly or indirectly refers to the recognition of the Zionist entity in occupied Palestine.

Ms. BIRD (Australia): The resolution just adopted on the international peace conference on the Middle East (A/46/L.36) fails in our view to give significant recognition to the major steps taken this year towards a peaceful resolution to the Arab-Israeli dispute through the convening of the Madrid conference and the continuatuion of that process. As it stands, the resolution will not assist that process and will be seen by some as prescribing its outcome.

In our view, as the resolution cannot in its current form make a constructive contribution to the resolution of the Arab-Israeli dispute, it would have been better not to have a resolution; but as that course was not followed, Australia decided to abstain. This in no way reflects any diminution of our concern for a comprehensive, lasting and equitable settlement in the Middle East and our support for steps to achieve it.

Australia's policy for the Middle East is based on two main premises: a total commitment to Israel's right to exist within secure and recognized boundaries and recognition of the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people, including their right, if they so choose, to independence and the possibility of their own independent State.

Australia voted in favour of the resolution on the uprising of the Palestinian people (A/46/L.37) because it is consistent with the concern we have long expressed over the violence in the territories and the violations of

(Ms. Bird, Australia)

human rights that have resulted from Israeli measures taken against the intifadah. Australia has, however, consistently taken the position that the General Assembly, in the wording of its resolutions, should avoid provocative language that exacerbates differences and hinders peace-making rather than constructively advancing it, and there are aspects of this resolution that are less balanced than they might be in this respect.

The situation in the occupied territories requires an approach that seeks accommodation and an end of violence from all quarters. An understanding of the situation in the occupied territories requires not only an appreciation of the legitimate claims of the Palestinian people to self-determination but also recognition of the historical situation in which Israel has found itself since its original establishment by a decision of the Organization, of the pattern of conflict continuing over a period of 41 years and of the concern it has for its own security and survival so long as its right to exist within secure and recognized boundaries is not universally accepted.

The great difficulty Israel has faced in dealing with the situation in the occupied territories serves to reinforce the urgent need for a comprehensive settlement to the Arab-Israeli dispute. Australia therefore welcomes the steps that have been taken this year to foster dialogue between the parties and encourages all parties to continue to participate constructively in the process of bilateral and multilateral discussions.

Mr. SUMI (Japan): Japan abstained in the voting on the resolution on an international peace conference on the Middle East (A/46/L.36). I should like to put on record our reasons for this abstention.

It has been Japan's policy to support the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations. My delegation believes, however, that the United Nations should encourage all

(Mr. Sumi, Japan)

initiatives that might lead to the achievement of a comprehensive peace. Therefore, rather than consider convening an international peace conference under its auspices, the United Nations should at this time encourage the conference that is co-sponsored by the United States and the Soviet Union and await its outcome.

The Japanese Government is furthermore of the opinion that by adopting this resolution the General Assembly would give the mistaken signal to the world that the United Nations intended to convene under its own auspices a conference that would supersede one that is taking place in Washington, D.C. In order to avoid this confusion, Japan abstained.

Mr. SALES (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): The delegation of Mexico has voted in favour of draft resolution (A/46/L.36), convinced that it contains constructive elements in the search for peace in the Middle East. The delegation of Mexico has always supported the appeals for an international peace conference that have been made by the General Assembly in the past. At the same time, and we have said this before, we held the position that such a conference, preceded by agreements on its proper structure and format, deserved the serious, unbiased consideration of all the parties to the conflict.

Now we are pleased at the convening of the Middle East Peace Conference in Madrid. The process that was begun there has our firm support. We consider, as expressed in the resolution just adopted, that the framework of the Madrid Conference constitutes an important step towards the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region. We hope that the parties proceed in good faith, guided by the noble aim of offering the peoples of the region the stability and security they demand, in the form of the full and sovereign exercise of their legitimate political, social and economic rights.

Mr. FREUDENSCHUSS (Austria): Austria has repeatedly had the opportunity to explain its position on the question of Palestine. Our position is well-known and has been consistent over the years.

In view of the valuable activities undertaken by the Department of Public Information with regard to the question of Palestine, Austria voted in favour of draft resolution A/46/L.35.

Because of our longstanding concern about the situation in the occupied territories, Austria also voted in favour of draft resolution A.46/L.37.

It was with regret, however, that we had to abstain from voting on draft resolution A/46/L.36. That text does not sufficiently take into account the recent convening of the Peace Conference on the Middle East in Madrid and the implications of this process. Although Austria continues to support the idea of an international peace conference in principle, such a conference should be called only at an appropriate time.

Mr. WIDE (Sweden): Mr. President, I have the honour to speak on behalf of the five Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

The Nordic countries welcome the process initiated at the Middle East Peace Conference in Madrid. At this juncture, all efforts should be made by the international community to support the negotiations now under way between the parties to the Middle East conflict.

The Nordic countries had to abstain from voting on the draft resolution on an international peace conference on the Middle East (A/46/L.36), as it puts an emphasis on a different framework for negotiations at a time when priority should be given to the Madrid process.

(Mr. Wide, Sweden)

For a number of years, the Nordic countries have supported the idea of an international peace conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations as a valuable contribution to peace in the region. Since the Madrid process was initiated, a new situation has emerged, and we do not consider discussion of a United Nations conference useful at this stage.

Mr. ZAWELS (Argentina) (interpretation from Spanish): The delegation of Argentina abstained from voting on draft resolution A/46/L.36 on the international peace conference in the Middle East, on the understanding that it does not contribute under the present circumstances to an expression of clear and unequivocal support for the peace process begun at the Madrid Peace Conference last October under the auspices of the United States and the Soviet Union and currently continuing in Washington through direct talks between the parties concerned.

That process for the first time offers hopes for substantial and positive change that will make it possible for the peoples in that region to live in peace and friendship in what we hope is the very near future.

I should like to reiterate my country's basic positions on the Middle East conflict and the question of Palestine.

The Argentine government recognizes the right of all States in the Middle East region, including Israel, to live in peace within secure, internationally recognized boundaries. Argentina does not recognize territorial conquests, and we feel that Israel should end its occupation of the countries occupied since 1967. We also believe that the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949, on the protection of civilians in wartime, applies in those territories. We have said repeatedly that the Palestinian people have a right to an independent State and a right to self-determination.

(Mr. Zawels, Argentina)

Any just and comprehensive solution to this long and tragic conflict should be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

Ms. PIATELLI (Canada): Canada has abstained this year from voting on resolution A/46/L.36, entitled "International Peace Conference on the Middle East", although we supported it last year. We would have much preferred to see a vote on this resolution deferred, because its consideration at this time is neither appropriate nor opportune in light of the conference begun at Madrid in October and now continuing into an important stage. Canada strongly supports the process begun at Madrid and hopes that it can result in a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

While the resolution has been amended from last year, we believe that the drafting changes are inadequate to reflect properly and to support the historic process now under way. This resolution risks sending the wrong signals and could complicate the current peace process, which is at a very delicate stage.

For this reason Canada decided to abstain from voting on the resolution. Canada continues to support strongly a comprehensive, lasting and equitable resolution of the Middle East conflict, based on direct negotiations amongst the parties concerned.

Regarding resolution A/46/L.37 on the Palestinian intifadah, Canada has joined with others in supporting this resolution that seeks to alleviate the causes and effects of the intifadah. Our support reflects the fact that my government has always been concerned about the intifadah and has deplored the violence that has occurred in its name, whatever the source and the cause.

(Ms. Piatelli, Canada)

Nevertheless, Canada would have been more comfortable with a more balanced resolution that took into account all the causes of the intifadah violence. We should also recognize that the level of tension and violence in the intifadah has been attenuated somewhat - certainly not enough, but there has been an improvement.

One of the more promising avenues for further lessening of the causes and effects of the intifadah will be progress at the current Peace Conference, whose bilateral stage has commenced in Washington. We hope that sufficient progress can be made in that context, so as to lessen the reasons for the concerns that have prompted this resolution.

Mr. RAVANCHI (Islamic Republic of Iran): The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran did not participate in the voting on draft resolution A/46/L.36 and voted in favour of the remaining draft resolutions under agenda item 33.

However, my delegation would like to express its reservations with regard to those paragraphs of the resolutions which recognize the Zionist regime.

Mr. FUENTES IBAÑEZ (Bolivia) (interpretation from Spanish): My delegation would like to state for the record the spirit reflected in our vote on draft resolution A/46/L.36. We believe in principle that the direct negotiations now initiated between the parties to the conflict should involve only those parties, which alone should determine the scope of an agreement. There should be no external pressure which can only cause trouble and would only make a final decision more difficult. Any mutual concessions that might be made towards the proposed end should be none other than those needed to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region.

(Mr. Fuentes Ibañez, Bolivia)

Had the draft resolution been voted on paragraph by paragraph, we would have voted in favour of paragraphs 1, 2, 4 and 6, which we feel are encouraging to the negotiating process based on mutually beneficial concessions and adequate compensation to both parties. We feel that the parties to the conflict are the only ones that can evaluate and define a solution at the negotiating table.

We would have abstained from voting on paragraphs 3 and 5.

Mr. SOTIROV (Bulgaria): Bulgaria has consistently supported all efforts aimed at bringing the Middle East region to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace. We feel that no efforts should be spared towards reaching these goals, especially in today's most favourable international conditions. Bulgaria welcomed the peace process initiated in Madrid and just resumed in Washington, D.C. That process offers a historic chance to reach an agreement that can resolve the Palestinian problem and allow all parties to the Middle East conflict to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries. The process deserves to be given every chance to succeed.

We are fully aware of the complexity of the issue. Successful negotiations will not be easy and will certainly require much goodwill, flexibility and restraint on behalf of all participants.

(Mr. Sotirov, Bulgaria)

It is our opinion that the international community, including the United Nations, should support the peace process under way, promote the establishment of a favourable atmosphere and avoid any action on the issues of substance currently being negotiated. For this reason, my delegation has found it appropriate to abstain in the vote on draft resolution A/46/L.36.

The PRESIDENT: The General Assembly has completed this stage of its consideration of agenda item 33.

In accordance with General Assembly resolutions 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974 and 43/177 of 15 December 1988, I now call on the Observer of Palestine.

Mr. AL-KIDWA (Palestine) (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations and, through it, on behalf of the Palestinian people, may I extend our most sincere thanks to all those Member States that voiced their support of the Palestinian people's struggle for its legitimate rights. In particular, I should like to thank those Member States that voted in favour of the draft resolutions that were adopted a few moments ago by the Assembly.

The adoption of these resolutions at this extremely important time is indeed crucial. In our view, this does not contradict our full support and welcome of the developments that have taken place with regard to the peace process, which began in Madrid and which, we hope, will succeed in Washington. However, while we strongly support that process, we cannot regard it, in any way, as a substitute for the United Nations or believe that it may take the place of international legality or perform the United Nations' role which, in our view, should be heightened and enhanced alongside the development of the political process, and not the contrary.

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Palestine)

The General Assembly has adopted resolutions relating to the work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the work of the Division for Palestinian Rights and of the Department of Public Information, with its programme on the question of Palestine and its training programmes. We trust that these resolutions will enable us and enable the General Assembly to increase direct participation in the political process so that the rights I have referred to may be exercised.

The General Assembly has also adopted an important resolution, yet again, on the intifadah of the Palestinian people in the occupied territory and on Israeli practices vis-à-vis our people. Those practices have not changed at all, neither has the political and legal position of the occupation authorities.

Then, the General Assembly adopted a resolution on the International Peace Conference in the Middle East - A/46/L.36. It is worth pointing out that the size of the opposition within the General Assembly to this draft resolution has not changed. In this connection, while we accept the explanations of those Member States, which have shifted from voting in favour of this draft resolution to abstention and accept their assurances and their position of support for the process that began in Madrid, we feel obliged to state the following:

First, we have tried, by all means, to assimilate the political changes that have taken place recently, particularly with regard to the peace process, and to reflect those developments in the resolution which has been adopted.

Secondly, it is appropriate to recall here that the adoption of this resolution, when it was adopted for the first time in Geneva in 1988, was the

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Palestine)

result, basically, of full understanding and agreement about the text with a large number of States, including those States which have abstained today. In particular it may be appropriate to refer to the position of the Twelve States of the European Community. At that time, this draft resolution did not represent the ceiling of the Palestinian or Arab political positions. It was a draft that was arrived at through joint action and full agreement on its text. Given these facts, we believe that the overall responsibility for the draft resolution is shared by all those who helped to draft it. We do indeed hope that later the situation will become clearer in regard to the process of settlement so that the General Assembly may revert to its unanimous or near unanimous position on this question.

Thirdly, it is difficult for us, frankly speaking, to understand the explanations given by some members based on the claim that no one should in any way act in a manner that may be prejudicial to the peace process while some of them tend to support another draft resolution which may shortly be before the Assembly and which, in our view, will have a direct negative impact on the peace process.

(Mr. Al-Kidwa, Palestine)

However, despite all this, what is most important is that the General Assembly, on the one hand, has supported its principled position of support for the principal political positions of the Palestinian people and the objectives towards which the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of our people leads that people. On the other hand, it is important to note that today's vote is the beginning of the road towards the General Assembly's shouldering of its direct responsibilities vis-à-vis the situation with regard to the question of Palestine and the Middle East.

This is the beginning of the road and not the end of the road. Therefore, let us just say that we are always willing to act together with all Member States so that we may reach the highest possible degree of agreement, understanding and unanimity.

Once again, I would like to thank you all very much on behalf of the Palestine Observer Mission.

PROGRAMME OF WORK

The PRESIDENT: Before adjourning the meeting, I should like to inform members that on Friday, 13 December, in the morning, in addition to taking action on the draft resolution submitted under agenda item 31: "The situation in Central America: threats to international peace and security and peace initiatives", the Assembly will also take action on the draft resolutions submitted under agenda item 37: "Policies of apartheid of the Government of South Africa", and agenda item 102: "United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa". It will also take up agenda item 18 (j): "Confirmation of the appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development".

(The President)

On Monday, 16 December, in the afternoon, the Assembly will consider reports of the Third Committee on agenda items 92, 93, 94 (a), 95 to 97, and 12.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.